

B THE AMERICAN BAPTIST

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Notice to Subscribers

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American Printing House for the Blind Hall of Fame Leaders/Class of 2013 Induction Ceremony



October 18, 2013 — Left Photo: Dr. Laurence C. Jones III with Mrs. B.J. LeJuene of Mississippi State University who facilitated the Induction. Right Photo: The Jones Family with the bas relief plaque of Dr. Jones. (Photos: Courtesy of American Printing House for the Blind)

By Gracie Lewis



On Friday, October 18, 2013, the American Printing House for the Blind honored the legends of the blindness field. This year, Dr. Laurence Clifton Jones and Martha Morrow Foxx of The Piney Wood Country Life School was honored. This school is located in Piney Woods, Mississippi. Dr. Jones is the “father-in-law” of Mrs. Mattie Jones, Civil Rights Activist and Warrior for Justice.

In the spring of 1909, a young black man came

to a desperately poor section of Mississippi, located approximately 21 miles southeast of Jackson and known as the piney woods. Dr. Jones was born in St. Joseph, Missouri and educated at the University of Iowa where he graduated in 1907. Dr. Laurence Jones saw the need for schooling among poor blacks in rural Rankin County. His task was not easy. He was almost lynched by a group of angry white men who thought he was preaching against white people. By the grace of God, he survived the rope, and they stopped the lynching and took up a collection for him to start his school.

Dr. Jones started The Piney Woods School with one student but later others came. The people in the area saw the earnestness and honesty of the young teacher and they contributed lumber, nails and small amounts of goods and money to the effort. Dr. Jones was known as the Professor of Piney Woods who held a “head, heart and hands” philosophy that addressed educating the mind bringing alive a spiritual passion and required the students to develop three skills by which they could support themselves—one they could do very well.

From the beginning, the Piney Woods Schools’ cur-

riculum consisted of vocational subjects along with the three “R’s”. Dr. Jones felt that many of his students would not go on to higher education and must be prepared to earn a living at a useful trade today.

In May 1913, at the end of its fifth year, the school received a charter from the Governor of Mississippi. Many teachers, black and white, joined the work from little or nothing as the school endeavored to train teachers for the State Department of Education and to teach handicapped and blind children. In the 1920s, Dr. Jones, who thought outside the box, added the

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The Piney Woods School Hall of Fame

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education of blind children to the school's purpose. He is credited with guiding the 30-year effort to establish the Mississippi school for the Negro Blind and eventually for integrating the two schools.

Ms. Martha Morrow Foxx guided the "blind school" at the Piney Woods from its inception 1929 until 1951 when it became the Mississippi School for the Negro Blind in Jackson, where she served as director

until her retirement (1969). Teachers, both black and white, from around the country came to Piney Woods to learn and embrace her methods.

The Five Blind Boys of Mississippi, a chart-topping, Grammy nominated group attended Piney Woods School for the Negro Blind. Piney Woods was a leader in teaching the blind. In 1945, Helen Keller visited the school and she was able to convince the Mississippi legislature to fund the establishment of the Missis-

issippi School for the Negro Blind. In 1951, this school was moved to a new location on Capers Street. The Five Blind Boys of Mississippi went on many fund-raising tours along with the Cotton Blossom Singers to raise money for the school.

On Friday, October 18, 2013 The Hall of Fame, Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field, Class of 2013 Induction Ceremony was held at the Hyatt Regency. Oh what a night we had! Opening remarks were given by Bob Brasher, Curator, Hall of Fame. We were given an history of the Piney

Woods Country Life School. We also heard from B. J. LeJeune, training Supervisor, National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low-Vision. Mississippi State University, Starkville.

We then got an opportunity to see the 22nd Annual Juried Art Competition and Exhibition of artist who are blind and visually impaired of all ages and skill levels. It was so great to have witnessed their Art work. They also received honors.

We ended this glorious evening with remarks by Napoleon Campbell, former student. And, we heard from Dr. Laurence C. Jones III's, grandson. He gave us such rich history of his grandfather. Then the night was closed out with picture taking of the descendants of Dr. Laurence C. Jones. The evening was phenomenal and it was a pure JOY to witness the contributions of these two African Americans who are largely unsung. Cathy Hughes CEO and owner of TV One is also the niece of Dr. Laurence Clifton Jones.

Today, the Piney Woods School accepts student in Grades 9-12 and has a maximum enrollment of 225 students. Approximately one third of its student population comes from Mississippi. Dr. Nichols informed us that the school has a 100% graduation rate with more than 97% who go on to such elite colleges as Howard University; Spelman College; Syracuse University and Morehouse College.

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Youth Matters Church Without Doors Reading Corner *Continued from page 5*



Madison Roy and Reagan Roy

love, strength, and hope by speaking through imaginary characters to teach children about leukemia, one of the most dreaded life-altering diseases that afflicts children. This is a great book that parents and grandparents can give to children to



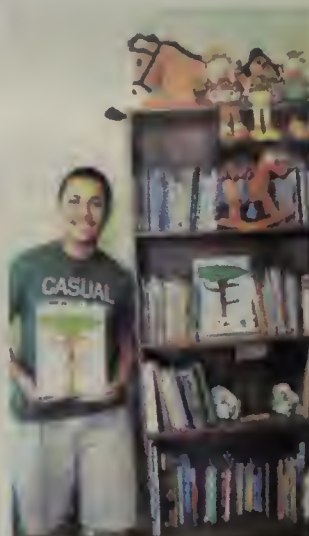
enhance their own humanity and instill the "human touch."

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Reagan Roy standing by several books available at the Church Without Doors' Reading Corner at 4509 W. Market St. The pastor at the Church is Rev. Alonzo Malone Jr. For questions call 502-551-1394.